

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 08878 201658Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-04 /090 W
-----062677 201822Z /53

R 201647Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6925
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 08878

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS EG
SUBJECT: TAKFIRIS HANG

REF: CAIRO 7724

1. DEATH SENTENCES, IMPOSED LATE LAST YEAR BY
MILITARY COURT ON SHUKRI MUSTAFA AND FOUR OTHER LEADING
MEMBERS OF RADICAL MUSLIM TAKFIR WA HEGIRA ORGANIZATION,
WERE CARRIED OUT AT DAWN MARCH 19. NEWS REPORTED WITHOUT
COMMENT ON FRONT PAGE ALL DAILIES NEXT DAY.

2. PM SALIM TOLD AMBASSADOR DECISION HANG TAKFIRIS
AT THIS TIME WAS TAKEN PERSONALLY BY SADAT AND HE (SALIM)
WAS UNAWARE OF PRESIDENT'S MOTIVATION ON TIMING. SALIM
ALSO SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME SAUDI PRESSURE TO COMMUTE
DEATH SENTENCES.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 08878 201658Z

3. COMMENT: SADAT MAY HAVE CHOSEN MOMENT WHEN ATTEN-
TION ALL ARABS DEVOTED ELSEWHERE. EXTERNAL PRESSURE
TO SAVE KILLERS OF FORMER WAQF MINISTER DHAHABI COULD
HAVE HAD OPPOSITE EFFECT, PARTICULARLY AFTER SIBAI
ASSASSINATION IN CYPRUS. SADAT COULD HARDLY SPARE
FORMER'S MURDERERS WHILE CALLING ON CYPRIOTS TO DEAL
SEVERELY WITH LATTER'S. ALSO POSSIBLE TIMING AFFECTED

BY MARCH 10 PUBLICATION MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S DAWA, WHICH
ATTACKED SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE, CALLED FOR LEGALI-
ZATION OF IKHWAN, DERIDED EGYPTIAN-U.S. TIES, WHILE
PRAISING PALESTINIANS.

4. MUSLIM GROUP'S RECENT SUCCESS IN UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS
ALSO MAY HAVE INFLUENCED SADAT'S DECISION. AS REPORTED
REFTEL, SUCCESS CAME DESPITE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION--
FIRST OCCASION ON WHICH GOE MOVED AGAINST UNIVERSITY-
BASED ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS. SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS OF
ISLAMIC RIGHT HAD SPECULATED TAKFIRIS WOULD NOT SWING
ONLY SO LONG AS IKHWAN AND OTHER LIKE-MINDED GROUPS RE-
MAINED QUIESCENT AND REFRAINED FROM CRITICISM PEACE
EFFORTS.

5. THERE HAS BEEN NO PERCEPTIBLE PUBLIC REACTION TO
EXECUTIONS THUS FAR; SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN CAIRO
APPEAR NORMAL. ANY TROUBLE, SHOULD THIS OCCUR, LIKELY
COME FROM UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. EILTS

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